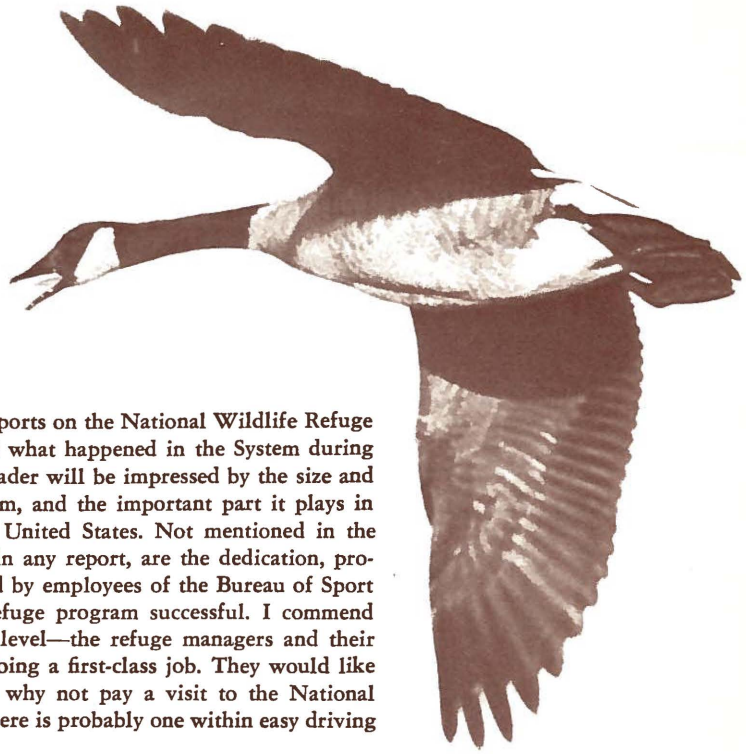
MY 11 '70

National Wildlife Refuges 1969

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Cover *photo*—Interpretation on National Wildlife Refuges is aimed especially at children. These youngsters admire a gosling at Agassiz Refuge in Minnesota.



This, the fifth in a series of annual reports on the National Wildlife Refuge System, will provide a quick review of what happened in the System during the calendar year 1968. I believe the reader will be impressed by the size and diversity of the national refuge program, and the important part it plays in the overall conservation effort of the United States. Not mentioned in the report, and all too seldom mentioned in any report, are the dedication, professional competence, and effort applied by employees of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife to make the refuge program successful. I commend particularly the personnel at the field level—the refuge managers and their staffs. By any measurement, they are doing a first-class job. They would like to show you what they are doing, so why not pay a visit to the National Wildlife Refuge nearest your home? There is probably one within easy driving distance. You will be welcome.

JOHN S. GOTTSCHALK
Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

United States
Department of the Interior

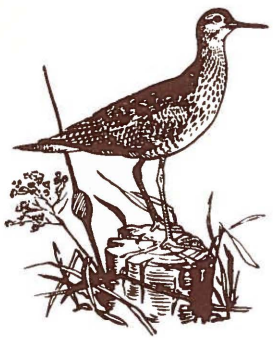
Fish and Wildlife Service

Bureau of
Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

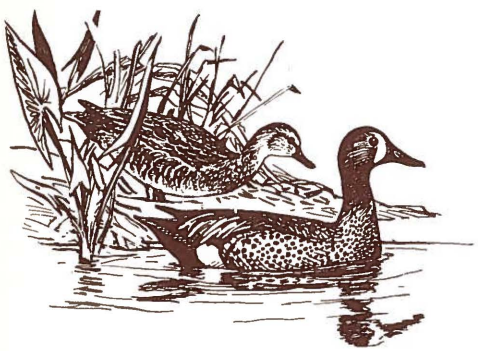
Resource Publication 82

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.



Lands in the National Wildlife Refuge System



The number of units in the National Wildlife Refuge System on July 1, 1969 was 327 including about 29.9 million acres. There are no refuges in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and West Virginia.

Seven refuges were new to the System in calendar year 1968:

	In	Acreage	Establishment date
Amagansett	New York	36	Dec. 16, 1968
Bear Lake	Idaho	16,978	May 9, 1968
Hobe Sound	Florida	800	Sept. 23, 1968
Oyster Bay	New York	3,117	Dec. 18, 1968
Pocasse	South Dakota	2,540	March 5, 1968
St. Vincent	Florida	12,358	Feb. 12, 1968
San Bernard	Texas	14,915	Nov. 7, 1968
Total		50,744	

Amagansett Refuge is the site of a former U.S. Coast Guard station on the southern shore of Long Island, New York, and is valuable as a remnant example of a beach-dune ecosystem. It is used by a variety of wildlife, including the rare Ipswich sparrow. ***Bear Lake Refuge*** in extreme southeastern Idaho is an extensive marshy area especially valuable for nesting western Canada geese and greater sandhill cranes. ***Hobe Sound Refuge*** lies on the inland side of Hobe Sound in eastern Florida. It consists of a dune-woodland-water habitat where such unusual species as great white heron, bald eagle, brown pelican, osprey, scrub jay, and manatee may be found. ***Oyster Bay Refuge*** is situated on the north side of Long Island, not far from New York City. It was donated to the United States by the Town of Oyster Bay and is of particular value to waterfowl, shore birds, and shellfish.

Pocasse Refuge lies on an eastern embayment of Oahe Reservoir on the Missouri River in South Dakota and will be developed as a waterfowl nesting area. ***St. Vincent Refuge*** consists of the island of the same name in the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast east of Tallahassee. In addition to being an important waterfowl refuge, it is used by large numbers of wading birds, shore birds, and other animals characteristic of this subtropical region. ***San Bernard Refuge*** is an extensive marshland on the central Texas Gulf Coast, where wildlife habitat is shrinking rapidly. It is used especially by wintering blue and snow geese.

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved additions to Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado; Coastal Maine Refuge in Maine; and Columbia Refuge in Washington. Two small refuges were dropped from the System: Davis Island Refuge in Mississippi and Willow Creek Refuge in Montana.

Leadbetter Point, a 1,433-acre peninsula on the coast of Washington, used as a resting, feeding, and wintering ground by ducks, geese, brant, and shore birds, and of high ecological interest as a barrier island, was added to the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Waterfowl Production Areas

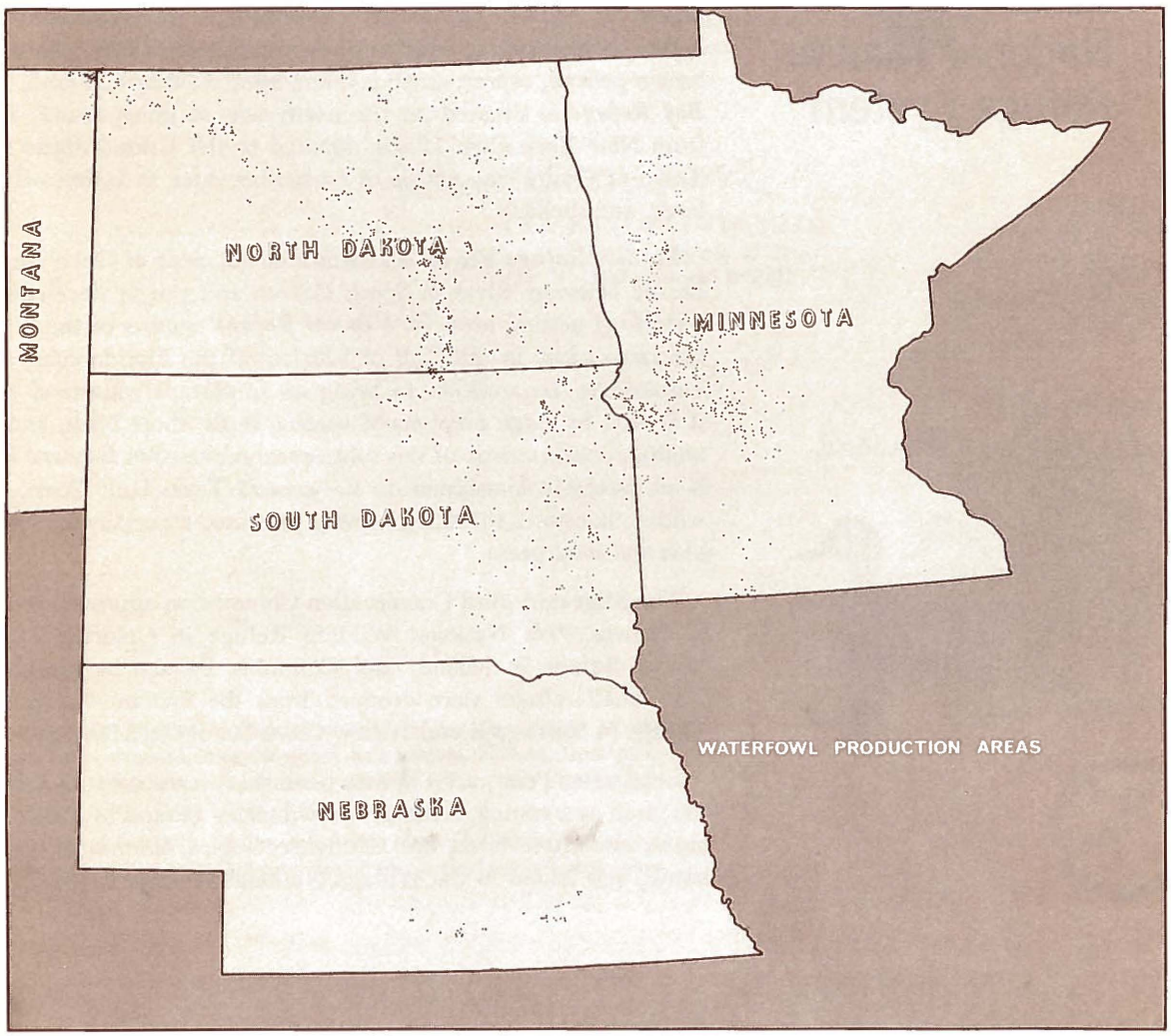
The Waterfowl Production Area (small wetlands) program of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in 1968 was in its 10th year.

The program is concentrated in the "duck factory" region of five prairie States—the Dakotas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Montana. Montana's first Waterfowl Production Area was established in 1968.

Each spring melting snows fill thousands of glacier-born depressions—lakes, marshes, and potholes. Each spring waterfowl and other water-loving birds return to them to nest. Every year since the plains country was settled more and more of these small wetlands have been drained or filled for agriculture. The cumulative effect on wildlife has been devastating. The Waterfowl Production Area acquisition program, begun in 1959, is designed to save as many of these wetlands as possible for waterfowl and other wildlife.

The wetlands-saving program has two parts. Fee purchases protect the larger and more permanent wetlands by putting nucleus areas in public ownership. More than 200,650 acres of such wetlands have been purchased. Under the second part of the program, smaller seasonally-temporary wetlands around the nucleus areas remain in private ownership, but are protected by purchase of easements under which the owner agrees not to drain, fill, or burn his wetlands. As of July 1, 1969, about 673,600 acres were under such easements. These, added to fee-purchased lands plus lands given to the United States and those reserved from the public domain, make a total of about 875,000 acres now involved in the Waterfowl Production Area program.

The Waterfowl Production Area program is financed through sale of Duck Stamps. All of these areas are a part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. They are administered from Wetland Management Offices in Devils Lake, Jamestown, and Minot, North Dakota; Aberdeen, Huron, and Madison, South Dakota; Benson and Fergus Falls, Minnesota; and Hastings, Nebraska.



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, New York

Environmental Interpretation

People are interested in wildlife refuges. They are visiting refuges in ever-increasing numbers. It is incumbent on those managing the refuges to interpret them to the public, so the visitor will leave with a keener appreciation of what the refuge is and does and with a better understanding of the man-and-environment crisis.

In a broad sense, interpretation in the National Wildlife Refuge System is concerned with these interrelated subjects:

The significance of natural features and forces in shaping and regulating the environment.

The kinship of man and his environment, and the place of man in the universal ecosystem.

The history and future of man on the land.

The relationships of man and wildlife.

The mission of the Refuge System and its role in society.

Each refuge illustrates many object lessons in all of these, which can and should be clarified to the public.

An interpretive program is well under way in the Refuge System, utilizing media such as wildlife trails, auto tour routes, visitor contact stations, and wildlife interpretive complexes, all with appropriate support facilities that use exhibits ranging from basic signs to complex audio-visual presentations.

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Texas

Marsh in the Great Swamp Refuge

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness Area

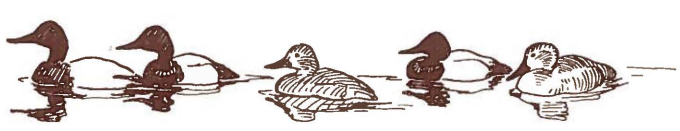
An Act (Public Law 90–532) establishing the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness Area was signed by the President on September 28, 1968.

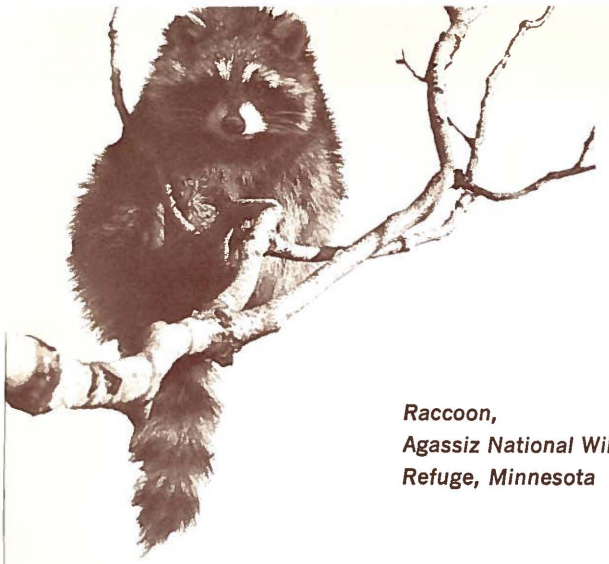
This Act designated about 3,750 acres of the Great Swamp Refuge in New Jersey as wilderness, under the terms of the Wilderness Act. There will be no commercial enterprise, no temporary or permanent roads, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of motorized transport, and no structure or installation within this wilderness.

The Great Swamp Wilderness Area is the first Wilderness Area to be established in the National Wildlife Refuge System, or on lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior. It is unique in being the only Wilderness Area that is adjacent to a heavily-populated region—in this case, the New York City metropolis. It is within less than 2 hours' driving distance of more than 10 million people, and is virtually surrounded by suburban developments.

This beautiful area of interspersed forest, swamp, marsh, and high ridges, rich in wildlife, offers a wilderness experience to the people of this megalopolitan region, as well as opportunities for study of a wide range of ecological and natural history phenomena.

Photo credits—Cover, Marvin H. Lee; inside cover, Howard A. Lipke; page 5, Lawrence S. Smith and Richard Gritman; page 6, Richard W. Rigby; inside back cover, Marvin H. Lee and Joseph Mazzoni.





Raccoon, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota

Visiting Refuges

Managers of national wildlife refuges welcome people who come to see wildlife, and to observe what is being done for wildlife.

This is one of the main purposes of any refuge whose geography makes it accessible to visitors. Most refuges are sufficient in size to accommodate many visitors without unduly disturbing the birds, mammals, and other wildlife that refuges are established to protect.

Where the opportunity exists, keeping in mind that the main wildlife purpose of the refuge must not be jeopardized, many kinds of wildlife-oriented recreation besides just wildlife-watching may be permitted. This includes fishing, hunting, and photography. On some areas picnicking is allowed where it is part of a wildlife-oriented recreation program.

Development for mass outdoor recreation of any sort, including swimming, boating, and camping, has a high potential for interfering with the overall wildlife uses and is limited by policy. Exceptions exist where legislation establishing the refuge specifically provides for such uses—such recreation taking place in the off-season for wildlife, or restricted to certain portions of some refuges.

Recreational visits of all kinds to national wildlife refuges in 1968 totaled 19.6 million—a 26 percent increase from the 15.6 million visits reported for 1967.

During 1968, 32 national wildlife refuges were designated as visitor entrance fee areas under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

Products of Refuge Management

Management of refuges for wildlife and people produced, in addition to the values received by wildlife and people while on refuges, certain measurable products and by-products during 1968:

More than 1,634,000 bushels of grain grown on 53,800 acres of refuge farmlands for the specific purpose of feeding wildlife. Sharecroppers on refuges took another 2,427,500 bushels of grain from refuge lands.

Livestock grazing on about 1,446,900 acres to the extent of about 511,100 animal use months.

Haying by permittees on 17,450 acres yielding nearly 23,000 tons of hay.

About 44.5 million board feet of timber removed from refuge lands in the process of creating improved wildlife habitat.

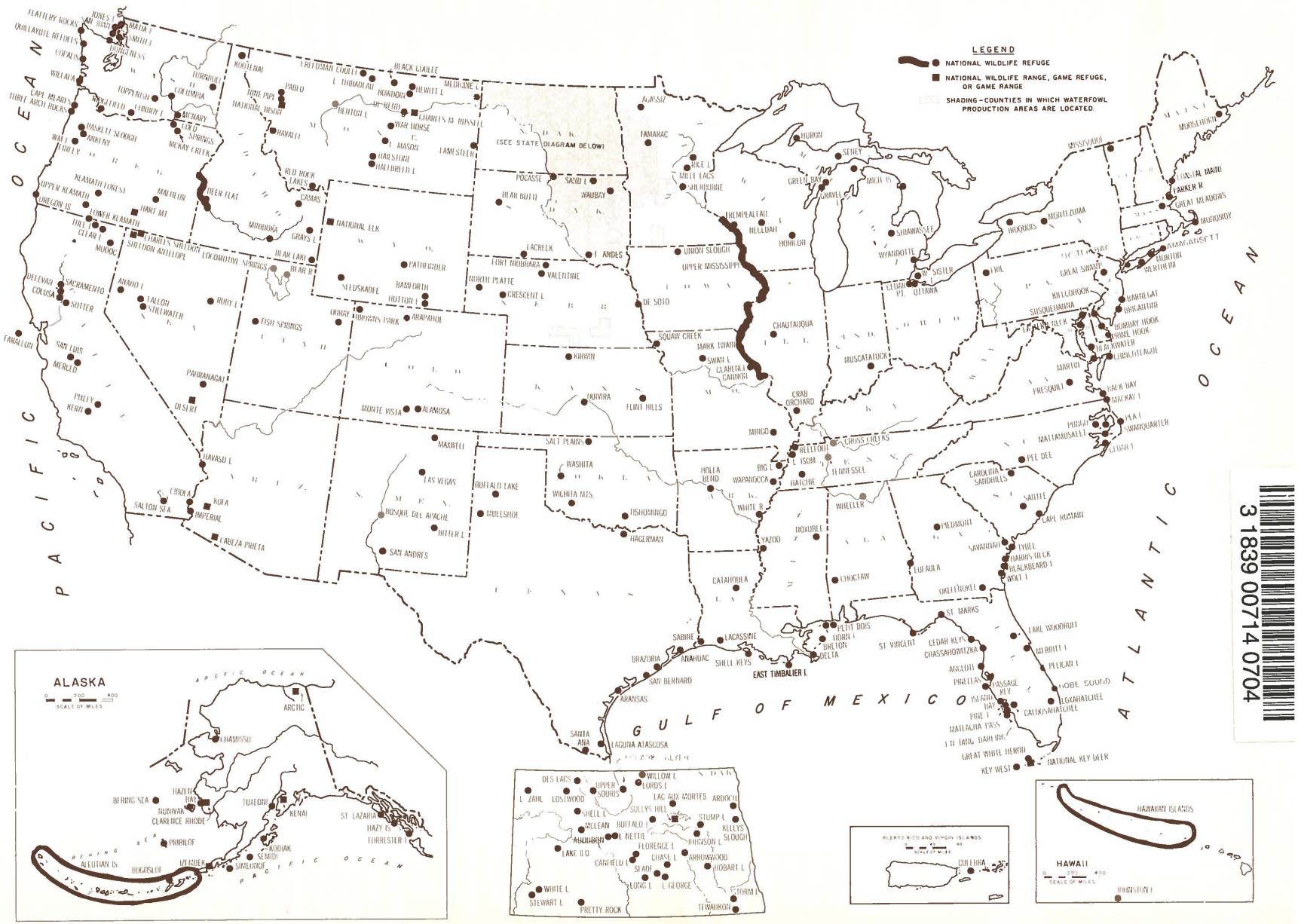
The sale of refuge products and privileges resulted in an income to the Government in fiscal 1968 of $4,216,885, an increase of $609,667 from fiscal 1967:

Royalties on gas and oil leases	$1,599,331
Forest products	1,329,374
Grazing leases	829,999
Surplus animal sales on four areas	173,748
Haying permits	126,732
Public use concessions	27,532
Sales of furs, refuge share	18,977
Sand and gravel permits	14,997
All others	96,195

Payments from refuge receipts due counties in which refuges are located totaled $1,942,772 in fiscal 1969. These payments under the Revenue-sharing Act of 1964 are based on three-fourths of 1 percent of the adjusted cost of acquired (purchased and donated) lands or 25 percent of refuge receipts on the particular refuge, whichever is greater; and 25 percent of refuge receipts from public domain land.

Bighorns, National Bison Range, Montana

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM



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